



One of the painted billboards in Scott St.

'Cancer' 6-1-81 on billboards: \$200 fine, bond

A MAN who painted the word 'Cancer' on two tobacco companies' billboards was given a bond and fined \$200 in Newcastle Court yesterday.

Daniel James Rogers, 22, apprentice carpenter, of Hobart Rd, New Lambton, pleaded guilty to charges of having at Newcastle on November 25 maliciously injured two tobacco advertising billboards, the property of W.D. and H.O. Wills (Aust) Ltd, and having maliciously injured a tobacco advertising billboard, the property of Phillip Morris Aust Ltd.

Const P. Simpson, of the Newcastle Highway Patrol, said that about 10.30pm on November 25 he saw Mr Rogers standing in front of an advertising billboard near the intersection of Scott and Newcomen Sts, Newcastle.

He saw Mr Rogers put an object inside his jacket before riding away on his bicycle.

He noticed the word 'Cancer' had been written in large print on the billboard, first with silver paint and then with black paint.

Mr Rogers had four pressure-pack cans of paint in his possession when stopped and spoken to in Newcomen St.

After he was arrested he told police he had painted three other billboards. Police found only two other billboards had been defaced.

When asked for an explanation, Mr Rogers told police: 'I did it because they kill kids.'

Mr C. Hill (for Mr Rogers) told Mr Meehan, SM, that it was not an act of wanton vandalism. Mr Rogers was concerned about the harmful effects of smoking.

'His father has had a stroke primarily induced by smoking,' Mr Hill said.

'He has an aunt with a chronic respiratory disease brought about by the same causes.'

Mr Rogers had been particularly upset by the way powerful vested interests had immunity to advertise their products even though these products were harmful.

'It appears to him restraints in advertising are inadequate and the means of registering legal protests are ineffective,' Mr Hill said.

On the charge of malicious injury to the Philip Morris billboard, Mr R. Meehan, SM, deferred passing sentence on Mr Rogers entering a \$100 bond for 12 months. Mr Rogers also was ordered to pay \$100 compensation.

Mr Meehan fined Mr Rogers \$200 on the other charge and ordered him to pay \$200 compensation.

Outside the Court, Mr Rogers told *The Newcastle Herald* that his actions were done 'on the spur of the moment'.

'I am trying to make people realise the damaging effects of tobacco and trying to combat the subconscious effects that tobacco advertisements on billboards have on people,' he said.



Another of the defaced billboards